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**MAYOR EMANUEL INTRODUCES APPOINTMENT OF MARK KELLY AS
COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today introduced the appointment of Mark Kelly as the new Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) to City Council. Kelly brings to the role a lifelong career in arts education and more than 30-year career in arts development in Chicago.

“Throughout his career, Mark Kelly has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to providing access to arts and culture for students and residents across the city,” said Mayor Emanuel. “Mark’s deep experience in the arts and academics will allow Chicago to continue expanding cultural experiences across all of our neighborhoods for residents and visitors from around the world to enjoy, and will further Chicago’s status as a global destination for the arts.”

Kelly will replace Michelle T. Boone, who served as Commissioner since 2011 and stepped down earlier this month to pursue other professional endeavors. Kelly will bring a lifelong career in arts education and a more than 30-year career in arts development in Chicago to the role, helping advance Chicago’s place as a cultural destination for artists and visitors around the world.

Before accepting the Mayor’s appointment as the new commissioner, Kelly served as the Vice President for Student Success at Columbia College Chicago for more than 30 years to foster and oversee an immersive arts experience for Columbia’s burgeoning student body, across its 100 different degree programs. Kelly has served in numerous leadership roles at Columbia, all while consistently supporting students who view the world through a creative lens in attaining a world-class education that blends creative and media arts, liberal arts and business.

Kelly has amassed more than 40 years of experience working as an academic administrator, with prior positions at Wayne State University and City Colleges of Chicago. Kelly is founder and chair of the Columbia’s Wabash Arts Corridor (WAC) initiative, framing the South Loop as a hub for street art, installations, and spectacle, and is the artistic director of the Halloween Gathering, an annual parade and festival celebrating Chicago’s cultural communities. Throughout his career, Kelly has served on many arts and cultural-centric boards, with active roles on the following: Arts Alliance Illinois Board; the Chicago Loop Alliance Board; and America’s Urban Campus Committee. Kelly holds a master of arts in counseling from the University of Cincinnati and a bachelor of arts in sociology from John Carroll University.

Kelly will serve as Interim Commissioner beginning August 15 until approval by the full City Council.

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